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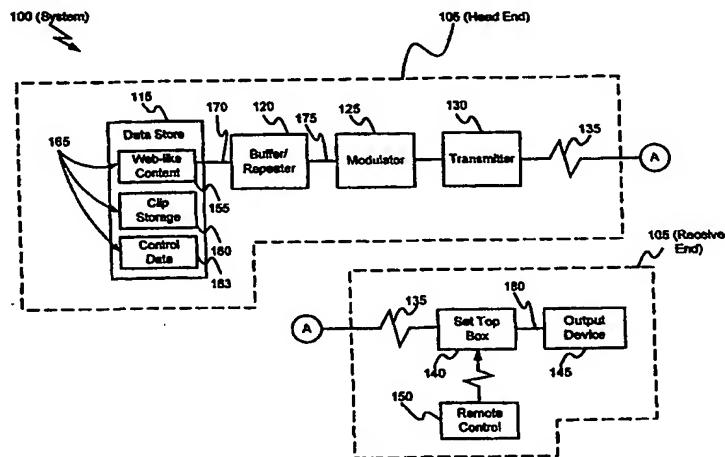
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(54) Title: **SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR TRANSMITTING AND RECEIVING DATA IN A NETWORK**



(57) Abstract

A transmission system and a receiver system enable an internet experience with enhanced content regulation and simplicity. The transmission system comprises a buffer memory storing data-to-be-transmitted which contains channel information, a transmitter for transmitting the stored data based on the channel information and a repeater coupled to the buffer memory and to the transmitter for repeatedly sending the stored data from the buffer memory to the transmitter. The receiver system comprises a receiver for receiving data packets being transmitted on the multiple channels, a device coupled to the receiver for extracting a data packet from the received data packets based on a comparison of the received data packets and desired packet identification information. The receiver system further comprises a browser coupled to the device for enabling presentation of an extracted data packet and for enabling selection of an option and a control engine coupled to the browser for managing the desired packet identification information based on the extracted data packet and based on option selection. The transmission system may offer multiple versions of the service, such as a basic, an extended and a deluxe version. The receiver system may be configured to receive a version based on a subscription package.

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SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR TRANSMITTING AND RECEIVING DATA IN A NETWORK

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

5 1. Field of the Invention

This invention relates generally to data transmission systems, and more particularly provides a system and method for transmitting and receiving data in a network.

10 2. Description of the Background Art

Cable television and internet television offer viewers both entertainment and intellectual value. Cable television allows a viewer to select a show from a broad range of simultaneous broadcasts. A viewer may review a broadcast guide, select a particular program and then tune-in to the proper channel. Alternatively, a viewer may flip through the channels until a program appears interesting. Internet television allows a user to “surf” a network, by connecting a set top box to the network and to the viewer’s television. The viewer interacts with the set top box, which responsively establishes communications channels with connected network servers. Accordingly, the viewer can receive and review an almost infinite amount of information.

20 Governments are concerned about providing internet television because its content is not regulated easily. A viewer can connect to any one of millions of servers to receive unregulated data. Thus, it is difficult for a government to control what each viewer sees on the internet. Governments prefer cable television, because its content can be supervised. For example, in China, the television broadcast industry is 25 regulated by the Ministry of Radio, Film and Television (MRTF). The MRTF has licensed over 2000 cable television broadcasters, the three largest broadcasters being located in Shanghai, Beijing and Tianjin. The MRTF sets cable television subscription fees, allowing for variations based on locality, and regulates cable television broadcast

content of each ministry. Accordingly, a system and method are needed that provide a user with an internet experience, but with the content regulation capability of cable television.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention provides an advanced Internet & digitized video content delivery system through which application programs can be quickly sent to millions of households in an affordable way over an existing cable TV infrastructure. The system 5 a transmitter and a receiver.

The receiver includes an advanced TV set-top box which receives Internet program broadcast from the transmitter. The box can receive many application channels being broadcast from the transmitter simultaneously. The box can intelligently filter out irrelevant information and display contents in anti-alias mode 10 that reduce the flicking effects of an ordinary TV set. With a remote control, a user can extract the application channel of interests, surfing them at fast speeds. The receiver has full Internet browsing capability. At the heart of the box is the core technology that enables faster and more efficient content delivery. This key technology allows various Internet applications to be delivered to a TV set at the same 15 time. Users can thus surf among Internet applications channels with a remote control which resembles a regular one for TV. The receiver receives control information from the transmitter, receives Internet contents from the transmitter, caches most recent/related information for the current active channel, formats and displays selected contents on TV with-Anti-flicking technology, sets initial/default application channel 20 contents, manages local & incoming Internet files in an optimizing way, process user requests through a remote controller, and manages local memory content .

The transmitter is responsible for obtaining, reformatting and delivering Internet contents. The transmitter schedules the application programs and stages them to a master insertion system through which the programs are broadcast. The 25 transmitter also manages user profiles and program packages. The transmitter obtains targeted contents from Internet, formats contents for insertion, schedule content delivery, sets up transmitter configurations, updates box configurations, updates transmitter configurations, allocates application channels, manages contents to be

delivered, and manages user profile and package. The transmitter complies fully with the DVB/DAVIC standard, supports constellations up to 256-QAM, formats the equalized data which is then fed into a DVB/DAVIC compliant synchronization block, de-interleaver, Reed_Solomon FEC, and de-randomizer. The final error-corrected 5 output is delivered in MPEG-2 transport format.

As indicated by the claims, the present invention provides a transmission system and a receiver system. The transmission system comprises a buffer memory storing data-to-be-transmitted, which contains channel information, a transmitter for transmitting the stored data based on the channel information, and a repeater coupled 10 to the buffer memory and to the transmitter for repeatedly sending the stored data from the buffer memory to the transmitter. The receiver system comprises a receiver for receiving data packets being transmitted on multiple channels, a device coupled to the receiver for extracting a data packet from the received data packets based on a comparison of the received data packets and desired packet identification information, 15 a browser coupled to the device for enabling presentation of an extracted data packet, and for enabling selection of an option, and a control engine coupled to the browser for managing the desired packet identification information based on the extracted data packet.

As further indicated by the claims, the present invention further provides a 20 transmitter method and a receiver method. The transmitter method comprises storing data-to-be-transmitted, which contains channel information, selecting a transmission channel based on the channel information, and transmitting repeatedly the stored data on the selected transmission channel. The receiver method comprises receiving a data packet being transmitted on a first channel, comparing the data packet against desired 25 packet identification information to determine if the data packet is desired, selecting the data packet if the data packet is desired, and managing the desired packet identification information based on a selected data packet.

With this system, cable operators can deliver additional value-added service to customers by delivering interesting and entertaining contents quickly to millions of households. Consumers can obtain the Internet experience without a computer that is difficult to use and expensive to buy. Moreover, content providers can accomplish 5 much higher exposure and faster vehicle to effectively deliver contents.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a block diagram illustrating a network system, in accordance with the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a block diagram illustrating details of data being transmitted;

5 FIG. 3 is a block diagram illustrating a start page window;

FIG. 4 is a block diagram illustrating a stock page window;

FIG. 5 is a block diagram illustrating details of the buffer/repeater of FIG. 1;

FIG. 6 is a block diagram illustrating details of the set top box of FIG. 1;

10 FIG. 7 is a block diagram illustrating a start page data packet contained within the data being transmitted of FIG. 2;

FIG. 8 is a block diagram illustrating a content page data packet within the data being transmitted of FIG. 2 for a first page;

FIG. 9 is a block diagram illustrating a content page data packet within the data being transmitted of FIG. 2 for all other pages;

15 FIG. 10 is a block diagram illustrating a control page data packet within the data being transmitted of FIG. 2;

FIG. 11 is a block diagram illustrating a method of transmitting one-way data to viewer systems;

20 FIGs. 12A, 12B and 12C are a block diagram illustrating a method of receiving one-way data at a viewer system; and

FIG. 13 is a block diagram illustrating a control page.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

The present invention enables a head end system to repeatedly broadcast all data one-way to viewer systems. Each viewer system can tune-in to the channels to retrieve the data. Because the head end system repeatedly broadcasts all available data, the viewer system need only know from what channel to extract the specific data desired. A viewer/user selects the specific data desired, and the viewer system automatically extracts the selected data from the data being broadcast. The selected data can then be presented on the viewer/user's television or on any other presentation device.

FIG. 1 is a block diagram illustrating a network system 100 in accordance with the present invention. The network system 100 includes a head end 105 coupled via a transmission line 135 to a receiver end 110. The head end 105 includes a data store 115, a buffer repeater 120 coupled via a first communications channel 170 to the data store 115, a modulator 125 coupled via a second communications channel 175 to the buffer/repeater 120, and a transmitter 130 coupled to the modulator 125 and to the transmission line 135. It will be appreciated that the terms "channel," "line" and "bus" are being used herein interchangeably to include any mode of communicating information from one node to another.

The data store 115 stores data-to-be-transmitted 165. Example data-to-be-transmitted 165 includes web-like content 155 such as HTML data, multimedia data, pictures, files, applets, ActiveX™ control, etc. and includes clip storage 160 such as movies, music, slide shows, etc. The data-to-be transmitted 165 may be loaded onto the data store 115 using conventional techniques, such as via a floppy disk, via a compact disk or via a connection to a network, e.g., the wide area network commonly referred to as "The Internet." A head end manager (not shown) may select the data-to-be-transmitted 165, and may input the data 165 to the data store 115.

It will be appreciated that the data-to-be-transmitted 165 may include any data that is manageable by a browser engine (625, FIG. 6) at the receiver end 110. It will

be further appreciated that the data-to-be-transmitted 165 is preferably first converted to "one-way data." That is, one-way data 165 preferably does not request the receiver end 110 to send information back to the head end 105. For example, the system 100 does not implement a two-way communications link or handshaking protocol between the head end 105 and receiver end 110. Alternatively, the data 165 may include and the receiver end 110 may ignore such requests. It will be still further appreciated that the data store 115 may also contain data that is not to be transmitted.

5 The data-to-be-transmitted 165 may also include control data 163, such as the control data 163 (FIG. 13). The control data 163 is used when the head end 105 offers multiple versions of the service, such as a deluxe version, an extended version and a 10 standard version. Based on the version selected/purchased by the viewer/user, the control data 163 enables the receiver end 110 to receive the selected/purchased version.

15 Generally, the buffer/repeater 120 receives or retrieves the data-to-be-transmitted 165 from the data store 115. The buffer/repeater 120 stores and repeatedly transmits the data 165 via the second communications channel 175 to the modulator 125. In the preferred embodiment, the buffer/repeater 120 is sufficiently large to store all the data-to-be-transmitted 165. The buffer/repeater 120 is described in detail with reference to FIG. 5.

20 The modulator 125 receives the data-to-be-transmitted 165 from the buffer/repeater 120, and converts the data 165 from a digital to an analog signal. It will be appreciated that, for example, a QAM-64 or QAM-1024 modulation scheme may be used. The QAM-64 modulator 125 transmits data at forty (40) megabits (Mb) per second or five (5) megabytes (MB) per second. Accordingly, the QAM-64 25 modulator 125 can send one hundred megabytes (100MB) of data in twenty (20) seconds. It will be appreciated that the QAM-1024 modulator 125 sends data twenty (20) times faster than the QAM-64 modulator 125, and thus could send the 100MB of

data in one (1) second. The modulator 125 forwards the analog data-to-be-transmitted 165 to the transmitter 130.

The transmitter 130 transmits the analog data-to-be-transmitted 165 to the transmission line 135 on multiple (N) channels, preferably, using MPEG-2 format and protocol, although another format and protocol may alternatively be used. The transmitter 130 may be based on the type of transmission line 135. For example, if the transmission line 135 includes a coaxial cable, transmitter 130 may include a coax interface. Similarly, if the transmission line 135 includes a satellite link, the transmitter 130 may include a microwave frequency interface. It will be appreciated that the buffer/repeater 120, modulator 125 and transmitter 130 preferably transmit data 165 at the same speed, so that no data 165 is lost or compromised.

FIG. 2 is a block diagram illustrating details of data-being-transmitted 200 by the transmitter 130. As illustrated, the data-being-transmitted 200 includes multiple packets 205 being transmitted on multiple (N) channels. More particularly, the data-being-transmitted 200 includes multiple packets 205 being transmitted on channel 0, multiple packets 205 being transmitted on channel 1, etc. In the embodiment described herein, there are 256 channels 210, and each packet 205 contains 188 bytes of information with the first byte being used for synchronization. Four different types of packets 205 are described in detail with reference to FIGs. 7-10.

Referring again to FIG. 1, the receiver end 110 includes a set top box 140 coupled to the transmission line 135, an output device 145 coupled via a third communications channel 180 to the set top box 140, and a remote control 150 coupled via a fourth communications channel (e.g., a radio frequency link) 185 to the set top box 150. Generally, the set top box 140 receives input from the remote control 150 indicating the specific data the viewer desires to be presented on the output device 145. It will be appreciated that the specific data from which the viewer can select may depend on control data 163 being sent. For example, if the viewer subscribes to a basic version instead of a deluxe version, the viewer may not be enabled to select

certain data. Using control data 163 is described in greater detail below. The set top box 140 tunes-in to the channels 210 to receive all data-being-transmitted 200 on transmission line 135. Based on the selection by the viewer, the set top box 140 extracts and forwards the specific data desired to the output device 145, which 5 accordingly presents (displays, plays, etc.) the data. The set top box 140 is described in greater detail with reference to FIG. 5.

FIG. 3 is a block diagram illustrating a start page window 300, which includes a title 310 and several options 305 from which to select content pages or specific data to be presented. For example, the several options 305 include "Weather," "Stocks," 10 "Classifieds," "Personals," "Movies," "Real Estate," "Music" and "Other Multimedia Data." The start page window 300 further includes a cursor 315 which is controlled by the remote control 150. Using the remote control 150 and cursor 315, a viewer/user (not shown) can select one of the several options 305. As stated above, the options 305 available may depend on the control data 163 being transmitted. It 15 will be appreciated that the packet 205 containing the start page data may be transmitted on a predetermined channel, e.g., channel 0, known to the set top box 140. Thus, the set top box 140 would always be capable of finding the starting point within the data-being-transmitted 200 at which to begin its presentation.

In the embodiment with multiple versions of services, the set top box 140 is 20 configured to first obtain the control data 163, which indicates the particular start page window 300 to present. The set top box 140 receives the control data 163 behind the scenes. The control data 163 includes a set top box address and a corresponding version of service. The set top box 140 recognizes its version of service, and accordingly extracts the channel and page IDs for the start page window 300. FIG. 13 25 is a block diagram illustrating details of control data 163. Control data 163 includes a physical channel and logical channel map 685, a list 1310 of set top boxes to be enabled, a list 1315 of set top boxes to be disabled, a list 1320 of set top boxes to be modified, and start page identification information per version information 1325. The

list 1310 of set top boxes to be enabled and the list 1320 of set top boxes to be modified includes version of service information for each set top box. Thus, the start page can easily be determined for each set top box 140.

The channel and page IDs for retrieving the page data for the content pages 5 identified by the options 305 are also stored in the start page data. Thus, upon selection of an option 205, the set top box 140 will know from which channel to retrieve the page data for the selected option 205. To increase speed, the set top box 140 may retrieve and cache the page data for all content pages identified by options 10 305. Retrieving page data for a selectable option 305 is described in greater detail with reference to FIGs. 12A, 12B and 12C.

FIG. 4 is a block diagram illustrating a content page 400 for stocks, which is presented upon selection of the "Stocks" option 305 from window 300 (FIG. 3). For example, the content page 400 includes a title "Stock Page" and the options 405 "NYSE," "ASE," "Mutual Funds," "FAQ," "Previous Page" and "Start Page." It 15 should be noted that, in this example, previous page and start page indicate the same page. The content page 400 further includes the cursor 315, still controlled by the remote control 150. As stated above, the stock page data will be sent on a channel identified within the start page data. Accordingly, upon selection of the stock page 20 option 205, the set top box 140 will know the channel having the stock page data, and will retrieve the stock page data therefrom. Examples of these links between a current page and a possible future page are shown and described with reference to FIGs. 7-10.

FIG. 5 is a block diagram illustrating details of the buffer/repeater 120. The buffer/repeater 120 includes a processor 505, such as an Intel Pentium® 25 microprocessor or a Motorola Power PC® microprocessor, coupled to a communications bus 525. The buffer/repeater 120 further includes a buffer memory 510 for storing the data-to-be-transmitted 165, and working memory 515 storing a repeater engine 520, each coupled to the communications bus 525. The working memory 515 may be random access memory (RAM), read-only memory (ROM), hard

disk, etc. or combinations thereof. The buffer/repeater 120 further includes a receiver interface 170 coupled to the communications bus 525 and via communications channel 170 to the data store 115 for receiving data-to-be-transmitted 165 from the data store 115. The buffer repeater 120 also includes an output interface 535 coupled to the 5 communications bus 525 and via communications channel 175 to the modulator 125 for transmitting the data-to-be-transmitted 165 to the modulator 125.

The repeater engine 520 retrieves or receives the data-to-be-transmitted 165 via the receiver interface 530 and stores the data 165 in the buffer memory 510. The repeater engine 520 repeatedly transmits the data 165 in the buffer memory 510 via the 10 output interface 535 to the modulator 125. It will be appreciated that the repeater engine 520 is configured to send the data 165 at the same speed that the modulator 125 sends the data 165, so that no data 165 is lost or compromised. Although the repeater engine 520 is being described as software, one skilled in the art will recognize that the repeater engine 520 may be implemented in hardware such as in an application-specific integrated circuit (ASIC). 15

One skilled in the art will recognize that the buffer/repeater 120 may further include an operating system (not shown), which may be stored in ROM 515, for controlling processing by the processor 505. One skilled in the art will further recognize that the buffer/repeater 120 may also include additional elements, such as 20 network connections, additional memory, additional processors, LANs, input/output lines for transferring information across a hardware channel, the Internet or an intranet, etc. One skilled in the art will also recognize that the programs and data may be received by and stored in the buffer/repeater 120 in other ways. For example, the receiver interface 530 may include a computer-readable storage medium (CRSM) 25 reader (n. shown) such as a magnetic disk drive, hard disk drive, magneto-optical reader, CD, etc. for receiving data 165 from a computer-readable storage medium (CRSM) such as a magnetic disk, a hard disk, a magneto-optical disk, RAM, etc. Similarly, the buffer/repeater 120 may include a compact disk (CD) and CD-ROM

drive or a tape and tape drive for repeatedly sending data 165 to the modulator 125.

FIG. 6 is a block diagram illustrating details of the set top box 140. The set top box 140 includes a processor 605, such as an Intel Pentium® microprocessor or a Motorola Power PC® microprocessor, coupled to a communications bus 630. The set top box further includes read-only memory 607, cache memory 610 and working memory 620, each coupled to the communications bus 630. It will be appreciated that the working memory 620 may be random access memory (RAM), read-only memory (ROM), hard disk, etc. or combinations thereof. It will be appreciated that the cache memory 610 may be any fast read/write memory. The set top box 140 further includes a receiver and demodulator 635, a remote control signal receiver 640, a field-programmable gate array (FPGA) 645, a graphics card 650 and an output device interface 655, each also coupled to the communications bus 630.

The receiver and demodulator 635 is coupled to the transmission line 135 for receiving all data-being-transmitted 200 on the transmission line 135. The receiver and demodulator 635 tunes-in to each of the channels, receives the data 200, and forwards the data 200 to the FPGA 645. It will be appreciated that the receiver and demodulator 635 may be hardware or software. The FPGA 645 de-packetizes the data 200 into the packets 205. In the embodiment having multiple versions of services, the FPGA 645 compares the channel and page IDs of the data packet 205 against known control data channel and page IDs 609 stored in ROM 607 to determine whether the data packet 205 includes control data 163. If the data packet 205 is a control packet, then the FPGA 645 compares an address 680 dedicated to the set top box 140, which is stored in the ROM 607, against lists of addresses within the packet 205 indicating set top boxes 140 to be enabled, modified and disabled. If the address matches one on the list of a set top box 140 to be enabled or modified, then the FPGA 645 stores new start page IDs 675 and optionally a new map 685 corresponding physical channels to logical channels. If the address 680 matches an address of a set top box 140 to be

disabled, then the FPGA 645 disables itself by setting a flag or by deleting the start page IDs 675.

In the embodiment having only one version of service, the FPGA 645 or ROM 607 may store the start page channel and page IDs 675 without storing control data 5 IDs 609. Accordingly, the start page is known. No comparisons need be performed. In yet another embodiment, control data 163 may be contained within the start page indicating whether to enable or disable a set top box 140.

If the data packet 205 does not contain control data 163, then the FPGA 645 compares the data packet 205 either against the start page IDs 675 identifying start 10 page data or against acceptance tables 624 identifying specific data desired by the set top box 140. It will be appreciated that the start page IDs 675 may be transferred into the acceptance tables 624, and a comparison performed with the data within the acceptance tables. If a match occurs, then the FPGA 645 forwards the start page data or specific data desired to the workspace memory 620 or cache memory 610, as 15 described below. Although the set top box 140 is being described as having an FPGA 645, one skilled in the art will recognize that any device, hardware or software, for performing de-packetization and comparisons may alternatively be used.

At system 100 start up (post configuration by control data 163), the FPGA 645 compares the data 200 against the start page IDs 675 stored in the FPGA 645. If the 20 data 200 matches, then the FPGA 645 transmits the start page data to the working memory 622 as page data 622. The FPGA 645 also compares the data 200 against current page and future page acceptance tables 624 stored in working memory 620 and generated by control engine 623. Generation of the acceptance tables 624 is described below. If the data 200 corresponds to data identified by the acceptance tables 624, 25 then the FPGA 645 sends the data to the working memory 620 as page data 622 or to the cache memory 610 as future data 615, as described below. At start up, the acceptance tables 624 are effectively empty, although the start page IDs 675 may be transferred to the acceptance tables 624 so that the start page can be retrieved.

After storing the start page data in the working memory 620 as page data 622, the control engine 623 retrieves link page information from the start page data. This link page information identifies selectable pages corresponding to the selectable options 305 (FIG. 3) and may identify other components of the current page (such as 5 pictures, applets, music, clips, etc.). The control engine 623 adds the link page information to the acceptance tables 624. More particularly, the control engine 623 adds each distinct link page message into a current page table 624 if it corresponds to the current page and into a future page table if it corresponds to a page selectable from the current page. Accordingly, the FPGA 645 will send the page data for the future 10 pages identified by the link page information in the future page acceptance table 624 to the cache memory 610 as future data 615. The FPGA 645 will send the page data for the current page identified by the link page information in the current page acceptance table 624 to the working memory as page data 622.

The browser engine 625 uses the page data 622 to generate network pages for 15 display on the output device 145. The data may be HTML data, which is interpreted by the browser engine 625 to generate the network page. The browser engine 625 operates in conjunction with the graphics card 650 to generate a bitmap display and refresh schedule. The graphics card 650 sends the bitmap display via the output device interface 655 to the video output device 145 for presentation. The browser 20 engine 625 may operate in conjunction with a multimedia engine (not shown) to generate music data, movie data, etc., which is sent to the output device 145 for presentation. It will be appreciated that the browser engine 625 may include the multimedia engine. The browser engine 620 displays a cursor, such as the cursor 315 (FIG. 3) on the video output device 145, and monitors signals from the remote control 25 150 via the remote control signal receiver 640. Based on these signals, the browser 620 manipulates the position of the cursor 620, recognizes "click" events selecting options 305/405, and informs the control engine 623 of the option 305/405 selection. The remote control 150 enables a viewer/user to manipulate the position of the cursor

315, to scroll the network page being displayed, to select options 305/405, etc. The signals are transmitted from the remote control 150 via the remote control signal receiver 640 to the browser engine 625 for processing.

Upon selection of an option 305/405, the control engine 623 reorganizes the 5 page data 622 and future data 615 as available and generates new current and future page acceptance tables 624. More particularly, if available, the control engine 623 transfers the data corresponding to the selected page from the future data 615 in cache memory 610 to the page data 622 in the working memory 620. Transferring data from the cache memory 610 increases the speed of processing the viewer's request. The 10 control engine 623 transfers the link page information for the requested page from the future page acceptance table 624 to the current page acceptance table 624. Thus, if the future data 615 does not contain the data needed for the requested page, the FPGA 645 will transfer and store the page data for the requested page to the working memory 620 as page data 622.

Again, the control engine 623 retrieves the link page information from the new 15 page data 622, and will build current and future page acceptance tables 624. The FPGA 645 resumes comparing and sending the appropriate data to the working memory 620 as page data 622 and to the cache memory 610 as future data 615 as described above. The browser engine 625 generates the new network page, e.g., the 20 stock page window 400.

FIG. 7 is a block diagram illustrating an instance of a data packet 205 for generating the start page window 300 (FIG. 3), referred to herein as data packet 700. Data packet 700 includes two (2) start/end bits 705, a one (1) bit version 710, a five 25 (5) bit page type 715, a one (1) byte channel ID 720, a two (2) byte page ID 730, a two (2) byte size 735, a one (1) byte number of link pages 740, a number (N) of three (3) byte link pages 750, and a payload 755. The page type 715 indicates the type of data, such as text, picture, movie, music, etc., contained in the packet 700. The channel ID 720 identifies the logical channel 210 in which the data packet 700 is being sent. It

will be appreciated that many packets on many logical channels 210 may be sent on a single carrier wave at a single frequency range. The channel ID 720 also indicates at which frequency this channel 210 should be included. When sorting packets 205, the 5 FPGA 645 compares the channel ID 720 with channel IDs contained in the acceptance table 624 or with the start page IDs 675. The page ID 730 identifies the particular packet within the channel 210 as belonging to a particular network page, in this case as belonging to the start page window 300. Again, when sorting packets 205, the FPGA 645 compares the page ID 730 with page IDs contained in the acceptance tables 624 or with the start page IDs 675. The size 735 indicates the packet size including the 10 header for the start page window 300. The number of link pages 740 indicates the number of other pages, corresponding to options 305, that can be selected from the start page. The link pages 750 include the channel ID and page ID for the selectable pages. The payload 755 includes the page data for the start page.

According to the above protocol, the system 100 can have up to 256 channels, 15 wherein each channel can have up to 65K pages, and wherein each page can contain up to 65K bytes. It will be appreciated that, in an embodiment, channels 2-32 will be in a first frequency, channels 33-64 will be in a second frequency, channels 65-96 will be in a third frequency, channels 97-128 will be in a fourth frequency, channels 129-160 will be in a fifth frequency, channels 161-192 will be in a sixth frequency, 20 channels 193-224 will be in a seventh frequency and channels 225-256 will be in an eighth frequency. Channel 1 will include the start page or the control page (FIG. 13) which identifies the start page, and will be available in all frequencies. In any case, a known channel will provide the starting point for entry into the data-being-transmitted 200.

25 FIG. 8 is a block diagram illustrating an instance of a data packet 205 for generating a content page (first packet for the page), referred to herein as data packet 800. The first page content page refers to every page other than the start page. Similar to the data packet 700, the data packet 800 includes two (2) start/end bits 805,

a one (1) bit version 810, a five (5) bit page type 815, a one (1) byte channel ID 820, a two (2) byte page ID 825, a two (2) byte size 830, a one (1) byte number of link pages 835, a number (N) of three (3) byte link pages 840, and a payload 845.

FIG. 9 is a block diagram illustrating another instance of a data packet 205 for a content page (other packets for the same page), referred to herein as data packet 900. Data packet 900 does not need the same header information as the data packet 800. Data packet 900 includes two (2) start/end bits 905, a one (1) bit version type 910, five (5) bits reserve 915, a one (1) byte channel ID 920, a two (2) byte page ID 925 and a 183 byte payload 930.

FIG. 10 is a block diagram illustrating yet another instance of a data packet 205 for control data 163, referred to herein as data packet 1000. The control data 163 may be part of the start page. The data packet 1000 includes two (2) start/end bits 1005, a one (1) bit version 1010, a five (5) bit page type 1015, a one (1) byte channel ID 1020, a two (2) byte page ID 1025, a two (2) byte size 1030, a one (1) byte number of link pages 1035 equal to one, only one (3) byte link page 1040, and a 177 byte payload 755. The payload 755 includes the two (2) byte Box ID identifying the set to box address 680, a seven (7) byte time of day identifying the current time for synchronization purposes, and like information. The payload 755 also includes the elements listed in FIG. 13.

It will be appreciated that the control page packet 1000 may include protocol information (not shown) for retrieving packets 205. Thus, the set top box 140 may first retrieve the control packet 1000 on a known channel 210 using a known protocol. The control packet may inform the set top box 140 of the new and improved protocol to use when downloading all future packets 205. The control packet 1000 may then request selection of an options package. Selection may be based on a preset signal hardwired in the set top box 140. Based on the embodiment used, either the control packet 1000 will indicate the start page to use or the set top box 140 will know the start page window 300 to use.

As stated above, the control data 163 may identify the start page. The user contacts the head end manager, e.g., via telephone, and request an options package, e.g., standard, extended or deluxe. Selection of a particular version indirectly selects the particular start page that will be available to the viewer/user. For example, the 5 standard package may offer only some options 305. The extended version may offer more options 305. The deluxe package may offer all options 305. Similarly, the different packages may offer different options 405 in content pages. If the system 100 uses multiple versions of services, then control page IDs 609 will identify the control data 163, the control data 163 will identify the selected start page, the selected start 10 page will identify the selectable content pages, etc.

FIG. 11 is a flowchart illustrating a method 1100 for transmitting data 200. Method 200 begins with the viewer/user (not shown) or an input device (not shown) in step 1105 obtaining one-way data 165, preferably, already packetized. The data store 115 in step 1110 stores the one-way data 165. In step 1115, the data store 1115 15 forwards or the buffer/repeater 120 retrieves the one-way data 165, up to the maximum capacity of the buffer memory 510. The buffer/repeater 120 in step 1120 forwards the one-way data 165 to the modulator 125. The modulator 125 in step 1125 converts the data 165 from digital to analog, and in step 1130 forwards the data 165 to the transmitter 130. The transmitter 130 in step 1135 transmits the data 165, as data- 20 being-transmitted 200, on transmission line 135.

System 100 in step 1140 determines whether to end the method 1100, e.g., because the system 100 has been turned off. If so, then method 1100 ends. Otherwise, the buffer/repeater 120 in step 1145 determines whether the data 165 stored in the data store 115 has been modified or replaced. If so, then method 1100 returns to step 1115 25 to obtain the new data 165 to transmit. Otherwise, the repeater engine 520 in the buffer/repeater 120 in step 1150 determines whether the data-to-be-transmitted 165 in the data store 115 is greater than the buffer memory 510 capacity. If not, then all data-to-be-transmitted 165 has been transferred to the buffer memory 510. Thus, the

method 1100 returns to step 1120 to repeat the transmission process (i.e., at least steps 1120-1135). Otherwise, the repeater engine 520 determines whether the cycle is over. For example, if the buffer memory 510 capacity is 5MB and the data-to-be transmitted 165 is 100MB, then the repeater engine 520 determines that twenty (20) packages 5 must be transmitted to complete the cycle. If the cycle is not over, then the method 1100 returns to step 1115 for the buffer/repeater 120 to obtain the next package for transmission. If the cycle is over, i.e., the transmitter 130 just transmitted the twentieth package, then the repeater engine 510 in step 1160 resets the cycle, and returns to step 1115 to retrieve the first package for transmission.

10 FIG. 12A is a flowchart illustrating a method 1200 for retrieving desired data from the data-being-transmitted 200. Method 1200 begins with the receiver and demodulator 635 in step 1201 tuning-in and receiving a data packet 205 from the data-being-transmitted 200 on transmission line 135, and forwarding the data 200 to the FPGA 645. The FPGA 645 in step 1202 de-packetizes the data 200 into data packets 205. The FPGA 645 in step 1203 determines whether the data packet 205 received 15 contains control data 163 addressed to this set top box 140. This determination may be performed by comparing the data packet 1300 against the known control data IDs 609 stored in the ROM 607 and comparing the address 680 to addresses within the data packet 205.

20 If the data packet 205 contains control data 163 addressed to the set top box 140, then the FPGA 645 in step 1204 performs the requested control. For example, if the requested control is to enable or to disable the set top box 140, then the FPGA 645 sets the appropriate flag. If the control is to modify the existing version of service, then the FPGA 645 stores the new map 685 and start page IDs 675. Method 1200 then 25 returns to step 1201. If the data packet 205 does not contain control data 163, then the FPGA 645 in step 1206 determines whether the receiver 140 has previously been enabled, i.e., whether a map 685 and start page IDs 675 have been previously stored in the FPGA 645. If not, then the method 1200 returns to step 1201. Otherwise, the

FPGA 645 in step 1207 determines whether the system 100 has just been started up. If so, then the FPGA 645 in step 1208 transfers the start page IDs 675 to the acceptance tables 624 and method 1200 jumps to step 1209. If not, then method 1200 jumps directly to step 1209. In step 1209, the FPGA 645 compares the data packets 205 with the acceptance tables 624. Method 1200 then continues with FIG. 12B.

The FPGA 645 in step 1210 determines whether any data packets 205 match the comparison criteria (i.e., the channel and page IDs in the acceptance tables 624). If not, then the method 1200 returns to step 1201. Otherwise, the FPGA 645 in step 1211 determines whether the matching data packet 205 corresponds to the current page or to a future page. If the matching data packet 205 corresponds to the current page, then the FPGA 645 in step 1212 sends the packet to the working memory 620 as page data 622. The control engine 623 in step 1213 generates acceptance tables from the current page data 622, by retrieving and storing the channel and page IDs from the header of the data packet within the page data 622. The browser 625, graphics card 650 and output device interface 655 in step 1214 present the current page on the output device 145 and enable option 305/405 selection. Method 1200 then continues with step 1224. If the matching data packet 205 corresponds to a future page, then the FPGA 645 in step 1215 sends the packet 205 to the cache memory 610 as future data 615. Method 1200 then continues with step 1224 in FIG. 12C.

In step 1224, the browser 625 determines whether an option 305/405 has been selected and, if selected, informs the control engine 623. If not, then the method 1200 returns to step 1202. Otherwise, the control engine 623 in step 1225 determines if the option 305/405 selected was the “End” option (not shown). If the end option was selected, then method 1200 ends. Otherwise, the control engine 623 in step 1228 transfers the current page data 622 to the cache memory as future data 615 (in case the “previous page” option 405 is selected). The control engine 623 in step 1228 also transfers the acceptance tables 624 to the cache memory 610 as future data 615 (again, in case the previous page option 405 is selected).

The control engine 623 in step 1230 determines whether the data for the selected option 305/405 has been stored in the cache memory 610 as future data 615. If so, then the control engine 623 in step 1236 transfers the data for the selected option 305/405 from the future data 615 to the current page data 622. The control engine 623 in step 1238 cleans up the cache memory 610 and the working memory 620, by erasing the obsolete acceptance tables 624 and the obsolete page data 622 from working memory 620 and the obsolete future data 615 from cache memory 610.

Method 1200 then returns to step 1220. If not stored in future data 615, the control engine 623 in step 1232 generates a new acceptance table 624 for the selected option 305/405, by adding the channel and page IDs for the selected page to the acceptance table 624. The control engine 623 in step 1234 cleans up the cache memory 610 and the working memory 610, by erasing all obsolete acceptance tables 624 and page data from working memory 610 and all future data 615 from cache memory 610. Method 1200 then returns to step 1202.

15 Returning back to page 1202 means that the set top box 140 must wait for the data 200 for the option 305/405 selected to arrive before it can be displayed. If the data 200 being waited for is a movie, then because of the length of the movie, it may take several minutes before the start of the movie data 200 resumes. Accordingly, a schedule of movies may be transmitted more often so that the set top box can inform 20 the viewer/user of the start time for or count-down until the next movie. Further, the set top box 140 will switch to the channel 210 right before the movie starts.

One skilled in the art will recognize that the set top box 140 may include an operating system (not shown), which may be stored in working memory 620, for controlling processing by the processor 605. One skilled in the art will further recognize that the set top box 140 may also include additional elements, such as network connections, additional memory, additional processors, LANs, input/output lines for transferring information across a hardware channel, the Internet or an intranet, etc. One skilled in the art will also recognize that the programs and data may

be received by and stored in the system in many ways. For example, a computer-readable storage medium (CRSM) reader (not shown) such as a magnetic disk drive, hard disk drive, magneto-optical reader, CPU, etc. may be coupled to the communications bus 630 for reading a computer-readable storage medium (CRSM) 5 such as a magnetic disk, a hard disk, a magneto-optical disk, RAM, etc. Programs and data may be entered into the set top box 140 via the CRSM reader.

The foregoing description of the preferred embodiments of the present invention is by way of example only, and other variations and modifications of the above-described embodiments and methods are possible in light of the foregoing 10 teaching. Although the network sites are being described as separate and distinct sites, one skilled in the art will recognize that these sites may be a part of an integral site, may each include portions of multiple sites, or may include combinations of single and multiple sites. Further, components of this invention may be implemented using a programmed general purpose digital computer, using application specific integrated 15 circuits, or using a network of interconnected conventional components and circuits. Connections may be wired, wireless, modem, etc. The embodiments described herein are not intended to be exhaustive or limiting. The present invention is limited only by the following claims.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- 1 1. A receiver system, comprising:
 - 2 a receiver for receiving data packets being transmitted on multiple channels;
 - 3 a device coupled to the receiver for extracting a data packet from the received
 - 4 data packets based on a comparison of the received data packets and desired packet
 - 5 identification information;
 - 6 a browser coupled to the device for enabling presentation of an extracted data
 - 7 packet, and for enabling selection of an option; and
 - 8 a control engine coupled to the device for managing the desired packet
 - 9 identification information based on the extracted data packet.
- 10
- 11 2. The system of claim 1, wherein the multiple channels correspond to a single
- 12 frequency.
- 13
- 14 3. The system of claim 1, wherein the multiple channels correspond to multiple
- 15 frequencies.
- 16
- 17 4. The system of claim 1, wherein each data packet includes identification
- 18 information for comparison against the desired packet identification information to
- 19 determine whether to extract the data packet.
- 20
- 21 5. The system of claim 4, wherein the identification information includes a
- 22 channel ID and a page ID for comparison against the desired packet identification
- 23 information.

24

25 6. The system of claim 5, wherein the device stores the extracted data packet in
26 current page memory.

27

28 7. The system of claim 1, wherein the extracted data packet includes link
29 information.

30

31 8. The system of claim 7, wherein the control engine adds the link information to
32 the desired packet identification information to determine whether to extract other data
33 packets.

34

35 9. The system of claim 8, wherein the device extracts other data packets and stores
36 the other data packets in future page memory.

37

38 10. The system of claim 1, wherein the extracted data packet includes control data.

39

40 11. The system of claim 10, wherein the control data identifies a start page.

41

42 12. The system of claim 1, wherein the extracted data packet includes multimedia
43 data.

44

45 13. The system of claim 1, wherein the desired packet identification information
46 includes acceptance tables containing current page information and link information.

47

48 14. The system of claim 1, further comprising a signal receiver interface coupled to
49 the browser for receiving a signal selecting the option.

50

51 15. The system of claim 1, wherein the control engine manipulates the desired
52 packet identification information upon selection of the option.

53

54 16. A receiver method comprising the steps of:
55 receiving a data packet being transmitted on a first channel;
56 comparing the data packet against desired packet identification information to
57 determine if the data packet is desired;
58 selecting the data packet if the data packet is desired; and
59 managing the desired packet identification information based on a selected data
60 packet.

61

62 17. The method of claim 16, wherein the first channel corresponds to a first
63 frequency.

64

65 18. The method of claim 17, further comprising the step of receiving a second data
66 packet on a second channel corresponding to the first frequency.

67

68 19. The method of claim 17, further comprising the step of receiving a second data
69 packet on a second channel corresponding to a second frequency.

70

71 20. The method of claim 17, wherein the data packet includes a channel ID and a
72 page ID, and wherein the step of comparing includes comparing the channel ID and
73 page ID against the desired packet identification information.

74

75 21. The method of claim 17, wherein each data packet includes link information.

76

77 22. The method of claim 21, wherein the step of managing the desired packet
78 information includes adding the link information to the desired packet identification
79 information.

80

81 23. The method of claim 22, further comprising the steps of receiving other data
82 packets, and selecting another data packet from the other data packets based on the
83 link information.

84

85 24. The method of claim 23, further comprising receiving a signal selecting the
86 option.

87

88 25. The method of claim 24, further comprising the step of manipulating the
89 desired packet identification information upon selection of the option.

90

91 26. A receiver system comprising:

92 means for receiving a data packet being transmitted on a first channel;

93 means for comparing the data packet against desired packet identification
94 information to determine if the data packet is desired;

95 means for selecting the data packet if the data packet is desired; and

means for managing the desired packet identification information based on a selected data packet.

98

99 27. A computer-readable storage medium storing program code for causing a
100 computer to perform the steps of:

101 receiving a data packet being transmitted on a first channel;

102 comparing the data packet against desired packet identification information to
103 determine if the data packet is desired:

104 selecting the data packet if the data packet is desired: and

105 managing the desired packet identification information based on a selected data
106 packet.

107

108 28. A receiver system, comprising:

109 a receiver for receiving a data packet containing data, identification
110 information, and linking information corresponding to at least one option;

111 first memory for storing current page data packets;

112 second memory for storing potential page data packets;

113 third memory for storing desired current page packet information;

114 fourth memory for storing desired potential page packet information;

115 a device coupled to the receiver, the third memory and the fourth memory for
116 comparing the identification information against the desired current page packet
117 information and against the desired potential page packet information, coupled to the
118 first memory for transferring the received data packet to the first memory according to
119 the comparison of the identification information and the desired current page
120 information, and coupled to the second memory for transferring the received data

121 packet to the second memory according to the comparison of the identification
122 information and the desired potential page packet information;

123 a browser coupled to the first memory for presenting the data for a current page
124 data packet stored in the first memory; and

125 a control engine coupled to the first memory, the third memory and the fourth
126 memory for manipulating the desired current page packet information and the desired
127 potential page packet information based on the current page data packet stored in the
128 first memory.

129

130 29. The system of claim 28, wherein the identification information includes a
131 channel ID and a page ID.

132

133 30. The system of claim 28, wherein the device includes an FPGA.

134

135 31. The system of claim 28, further comprising a signal receiver interface coupled
136 to the browser for receiving a signal selecting the option.

137

138 32. The system of claim 31, wherein the control engine manipulates the desired
139 current page packet information upon selection of the option.

140

141 33. The system of claim 32, wherein the control engine retrieves from the second
142 memory the data packet corresponding to the linking information which corresponds
143 to the selected option, and stores it in the first memory.

144

145 34. The system of claim 32, wherein the second memory does not store the data
146 packet corresponding to the linking information which corresponds to the selected

147 option, and wherein the control engine adds the linking information to the third
148 memory as desired current page packet information.

149

150 35. The system of claim 34, wherein, upon selection of the option, the control
151 engine cleans up the first, second, third and fourth memories.

152

153 36. The system of claim 28, wherein, upon system start-up, the third memory stores
154 start page information as the desired current page packet information.

155

156 37. A receiver method, comprising:

157 receiving a data packet containing data, identification information, and linking
158 information corresponding to at least one option;

159 comparing the identification information against desired current page packet
160 information and against the desired potential page packet information;

161 transferring the received data packet to first memory as a current page data
162 packet when the comparison of the identification information matches the desired
163 current page information;

164 transferring the received data packet to second memory when the identification
165 information matches the desired potential page packet information;

166 presenting the data for a current page data packet stored in the first memory;
167 and

168 manipulating the desired current page packet information and the desired
169 potential page packet information based on the current page data packet stored in the
170 first memory.

171

172 38. The method of claim 37, wherein the identification information includes a
173 channel ID and a page ID.

174

175 39. The method of claim 38, further comprising receiving a signal selecting the
176 option.

177

178 40. The method of claim 39, wherein manipulating occurs upon selection of the
179 option.

180

181 41. The method of claim 40, further comprising retrieving from the second memory
182 the data packet corresponding to the linking information which corresponds to the
183 selected option, and storing it in the first memory.

184

185 42. The method of claim 40, further comprising adding the linking information to
186 the desired current page packet information.

187

188 43. The method of claim 42, wherein, upon system start-up, the desired current
189 page packet information includes start page information.

190

191 44. A receiver method, comprising:

192 means for receiving a data packet containing data, identification information,
193 and linking information corresponding to at least one option;

194 means for comparing the identification information against desired current page
195 packet information and against the desired potential page packet information;

196 means for transferring the received data packet to first memory as a current
197 page data packet when the comparison of the identification information matches the
198 desired current page information;

199 means for transferring the received data packet to second memory when the
200 identification information matches the desired potential page packet information;

201 means for presenting the data for a current page data packet stored in the first
202 memory; and

203 means for manipulating the desired current page packet information and the
204 desired potential page packet information based on the current page data packet stored
205 in the first memory.

206 45. A computer-readable storage medium storing program code for causing a
207 computer to perform the steps of:

208 receiving a data packet containing data, identification information, and linking
209 information corresponding to at least one option;

210 comparing the identification information against desired current page packet
211 information and against the desired potential page packet information;

212 transferring the received data packet to first memory as a current page data
213 packet when the comparison of the identification information matches the desired
214 current page information;

215 transferring the received data packet to second memory when the identification
216 information matches the desired potential page packet information;

217 presenting the data for a current page data packet stored in the first memory;
218 and

219 manipulating the desired current page packet information and the desired
220 potential page packet information based on the current page data packet stored in the
221 first memory.

222

223 46. A transmission system, comprising:

224 a buffer memory storing data-to-be-transmitted, which contains channel
225 information;

226 a transmitter for transmitting the stored data based on the channel information;
227 and

228 a repeater coupled to the buffer memory and to the transmitter for repeatedly
229 sending the stored data from the buffer memory to the transmitter.

230

231 47. A transmission method, comprising:

232 storing data-to-be-transmitted, which contains channel information;
233 selecting a transmission channel based on the channel information; and
234 transmitting repeatedly the stored data on the selected transmission channel.

235

236 48. A system comprising:
237 receiving data packets for multiple instances of a presentation;
238 receiving a program guide, which contains data for offering selection of one of
239 the instances and containing identification information for enabling extraction of each
240 of the instances;
241 using the data to present the program guide;
242 enabling selection of an instance presented by the program guide;
243 receiving the selection of an instance;
244 using the identification information to extract data packets for the selected
245 instance from the received data packets; and
246 presenting dynamically the data packets for the selected instance.

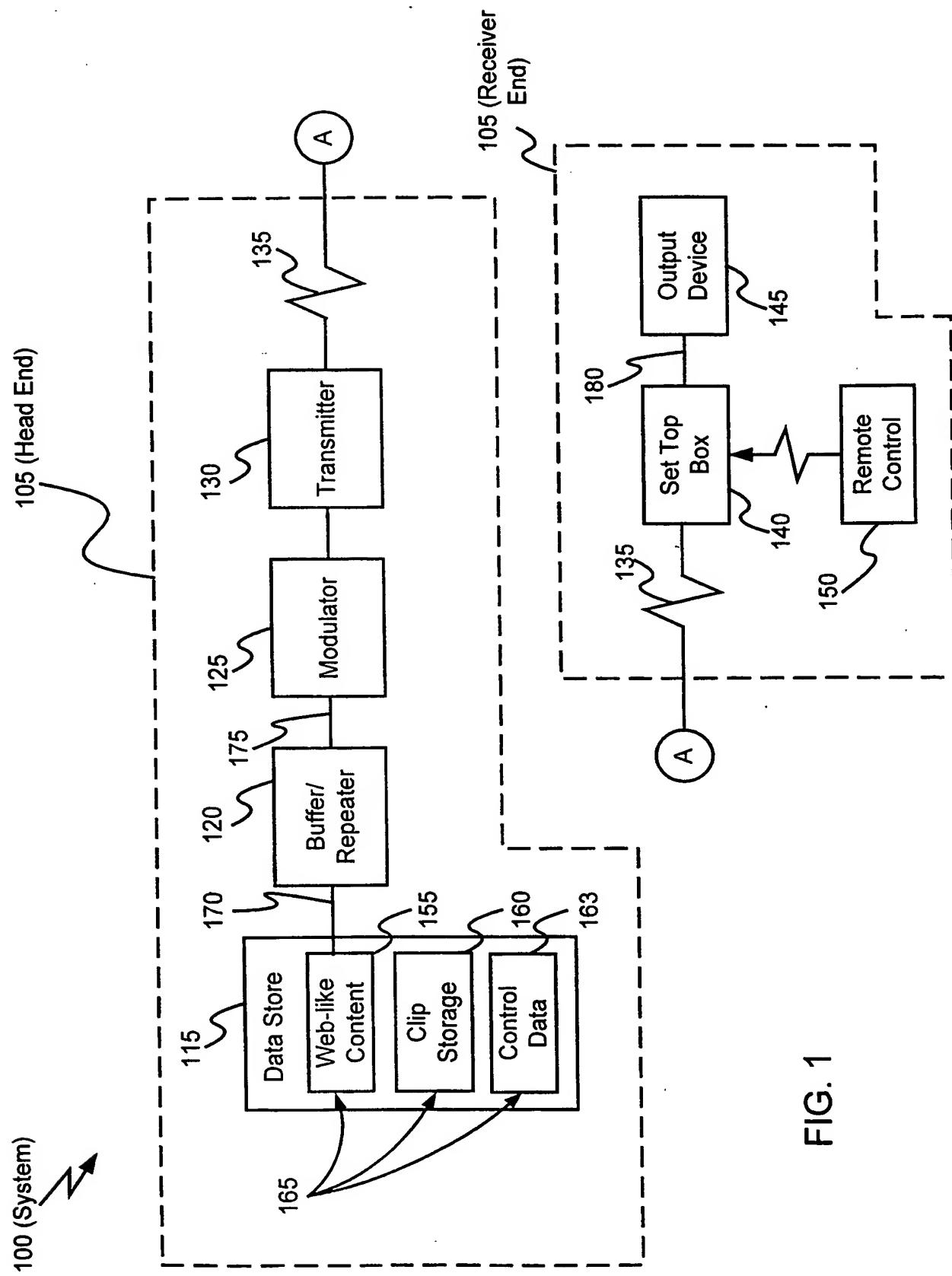


FIG. 1

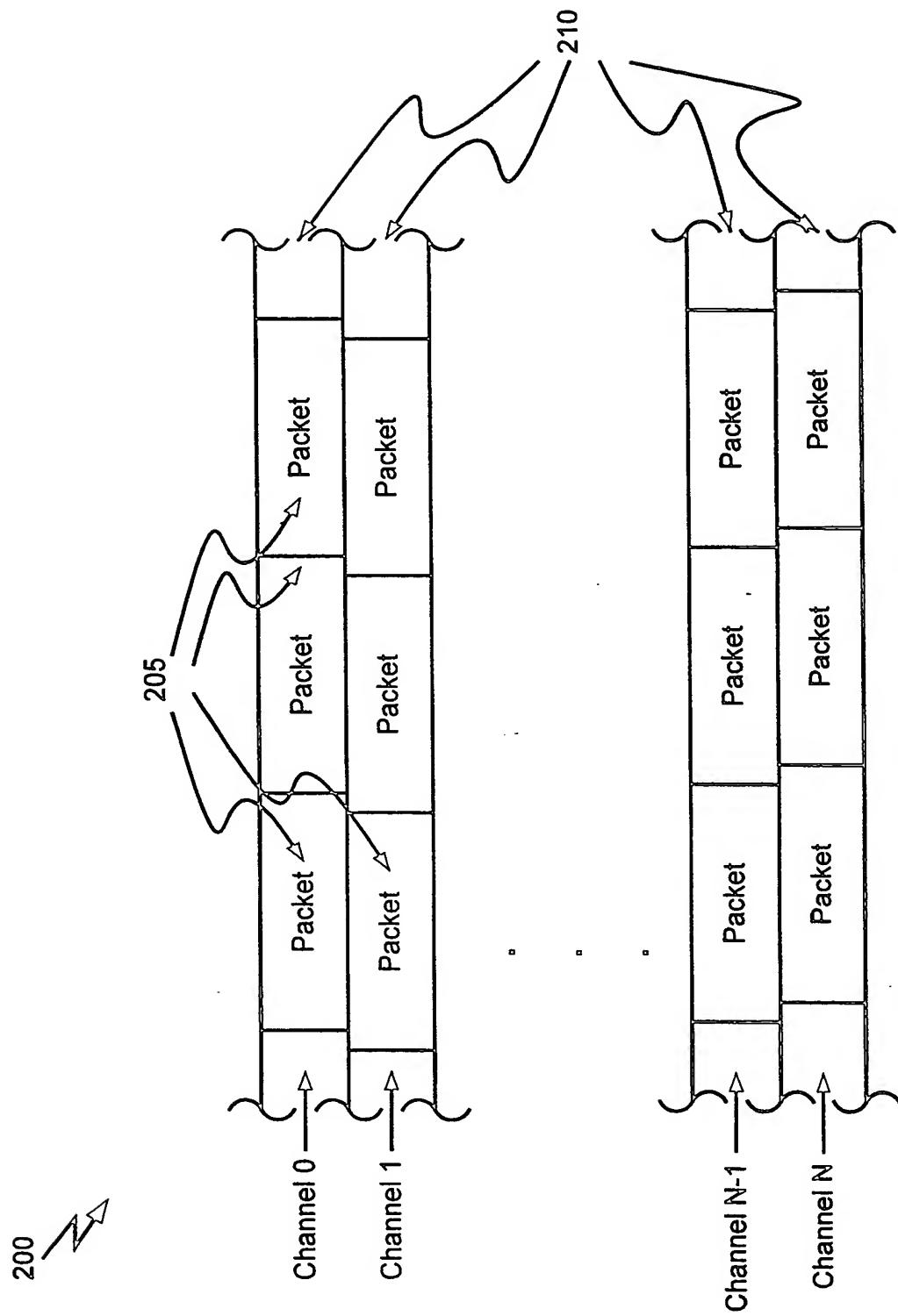


FIG. 2

3/15

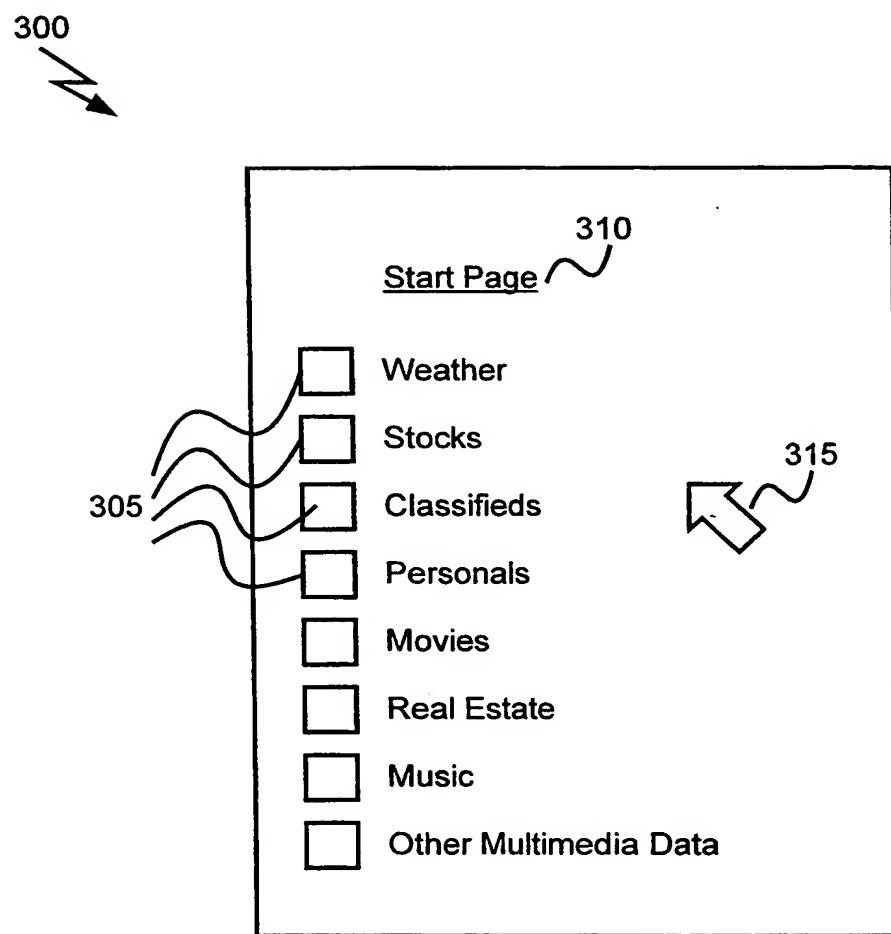


FIG. 3

4/15

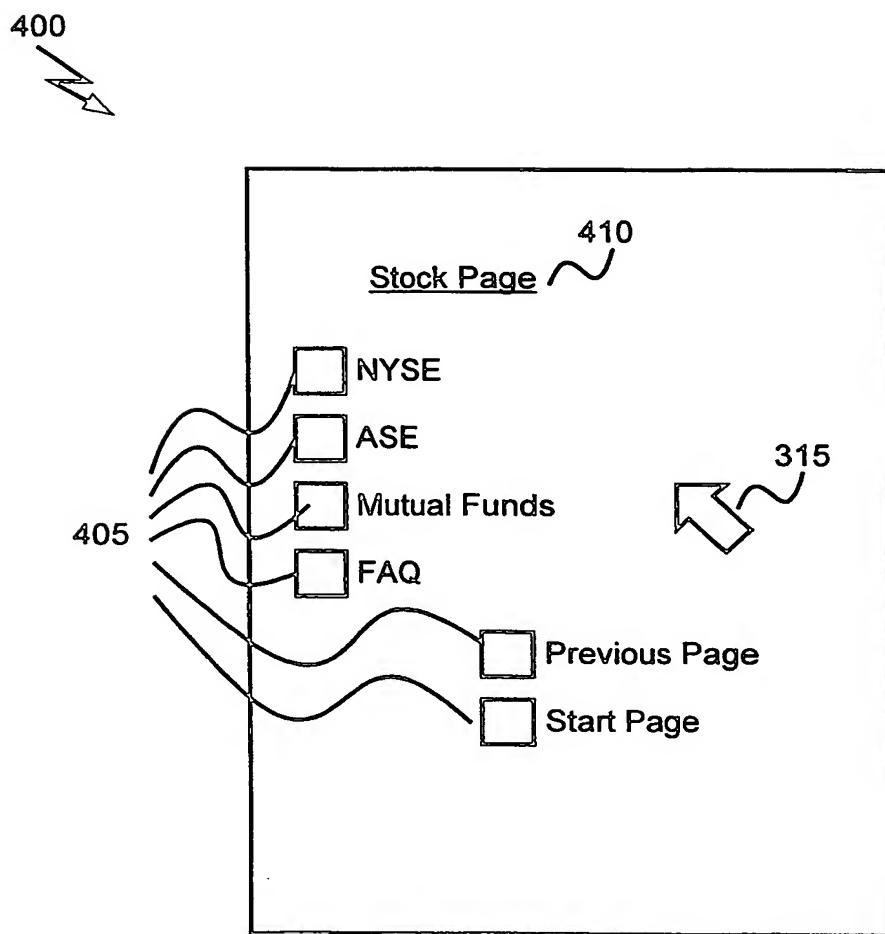


FIG. 4

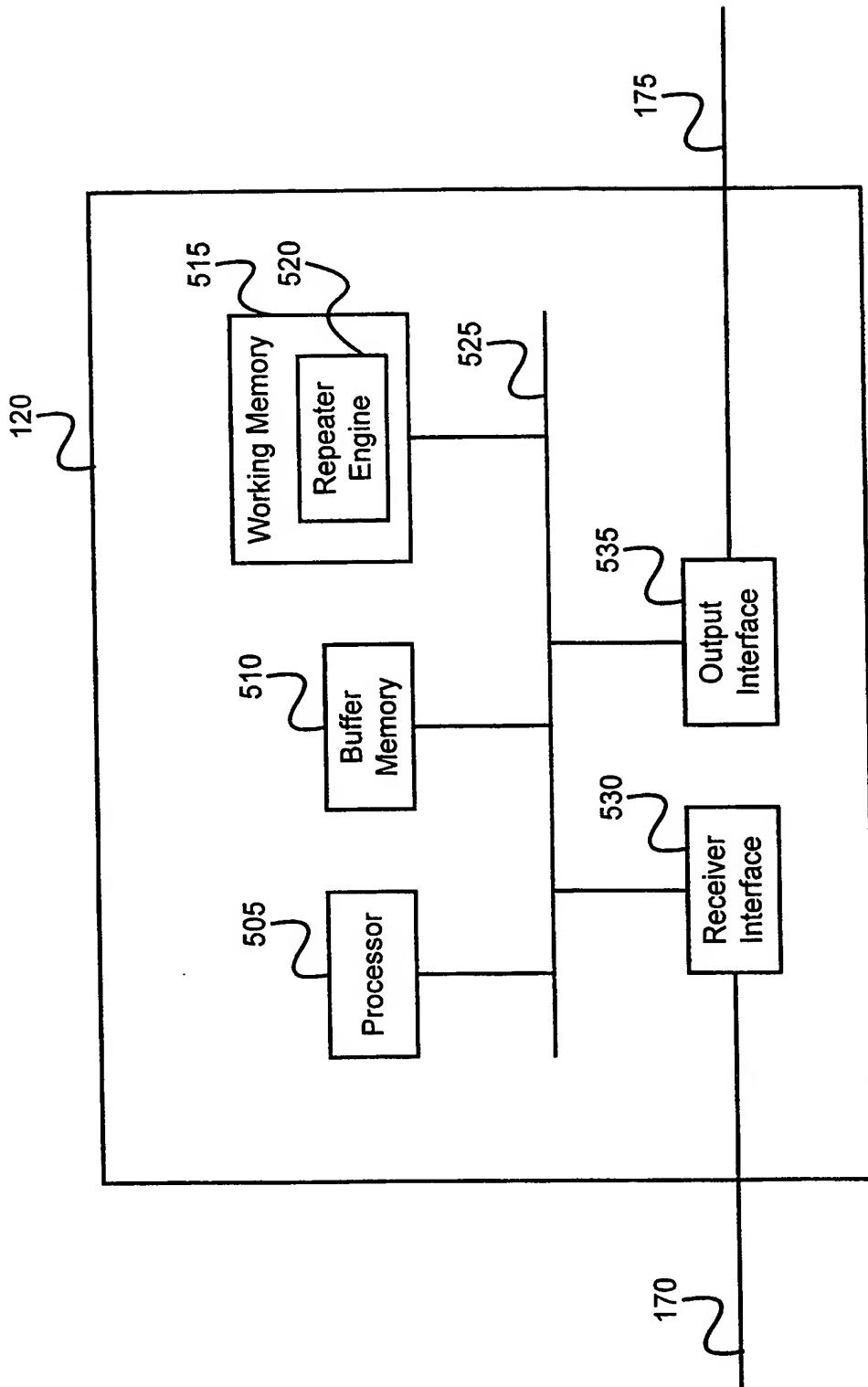


FIG. 5 (Buffer/Repeater)

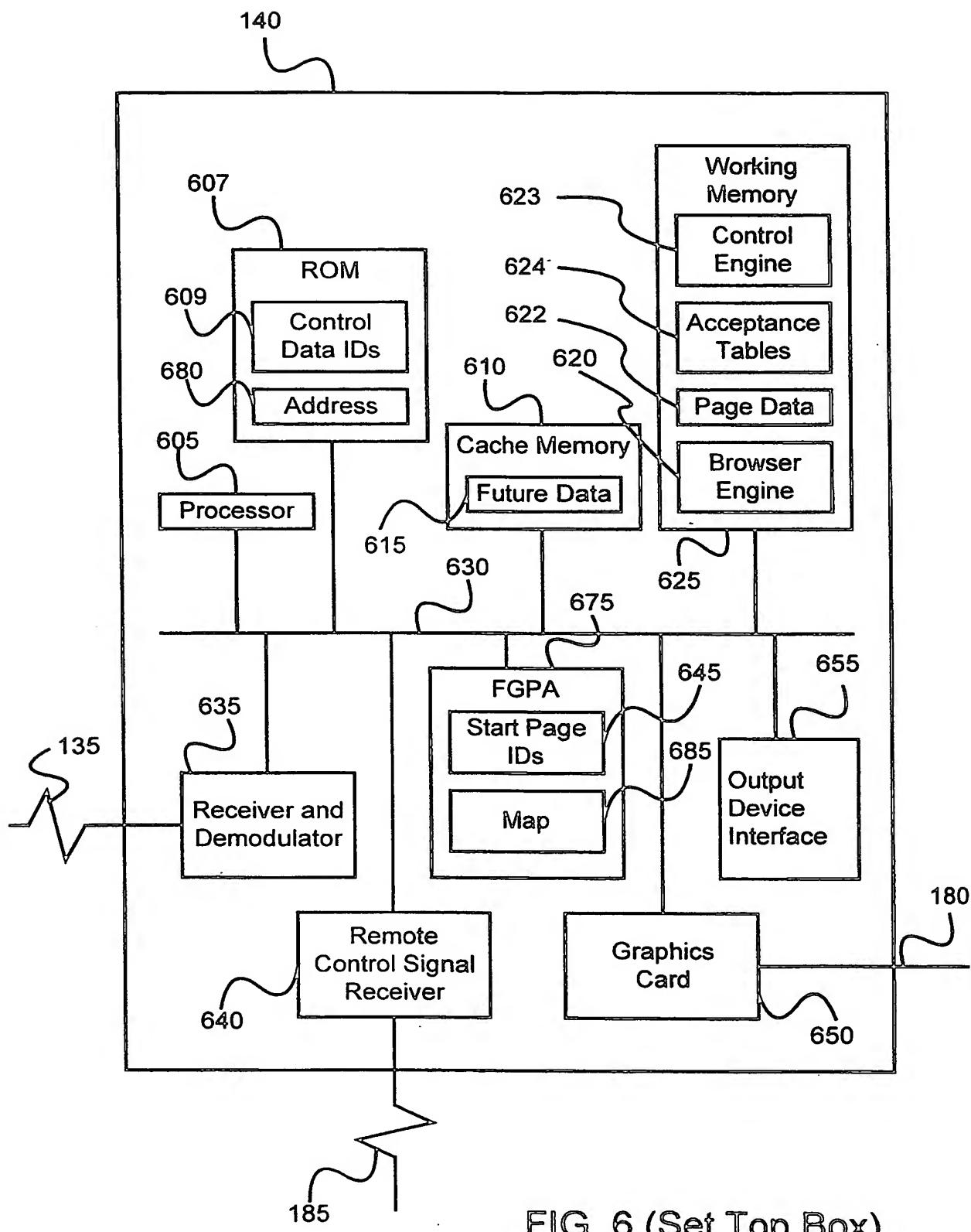


FIG. 6 (Set Top Box)

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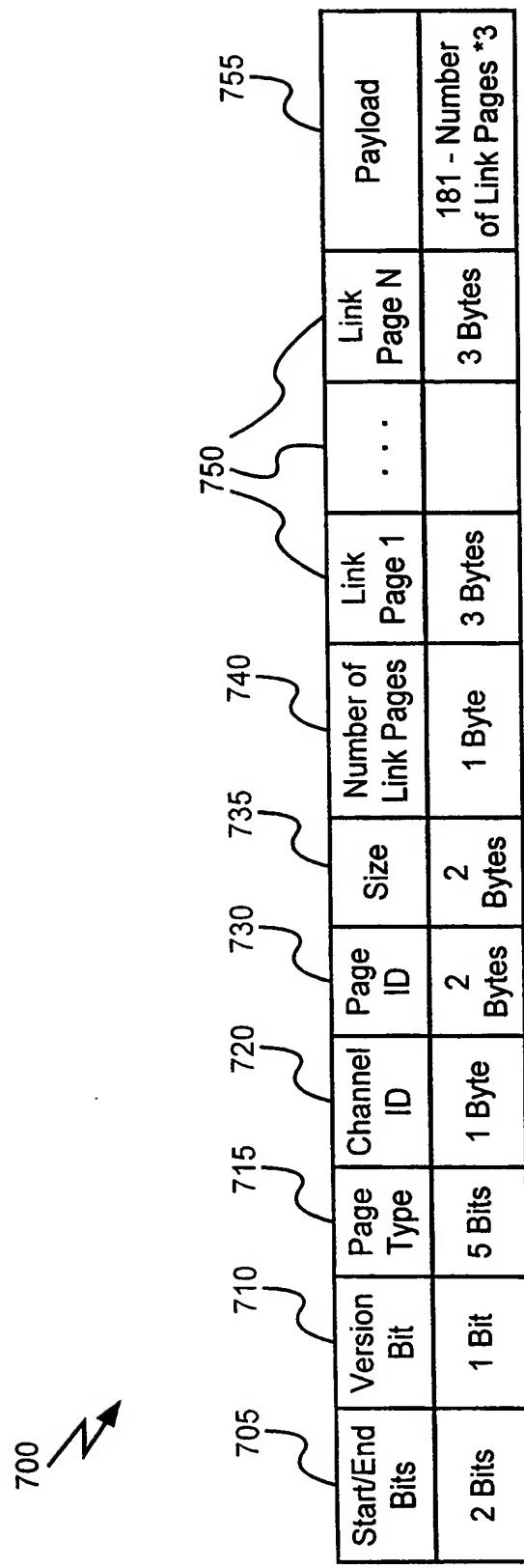


FIG. 7 (Start Page)

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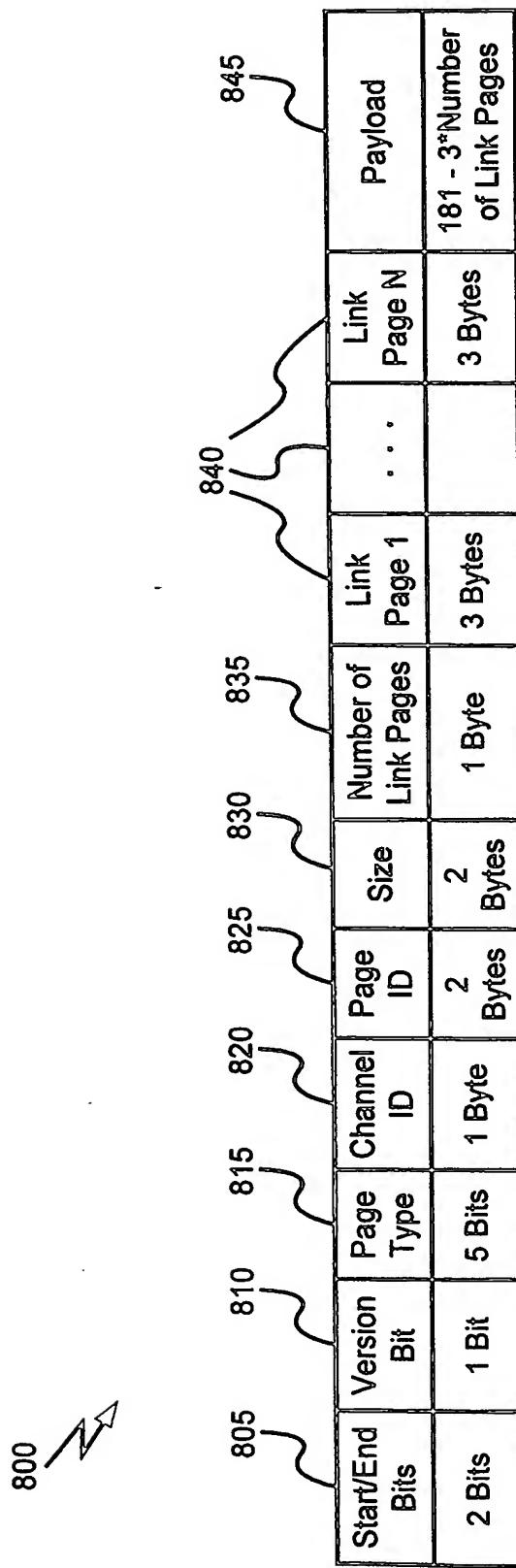


FIG. 8(Content Page - 1st)

9/15

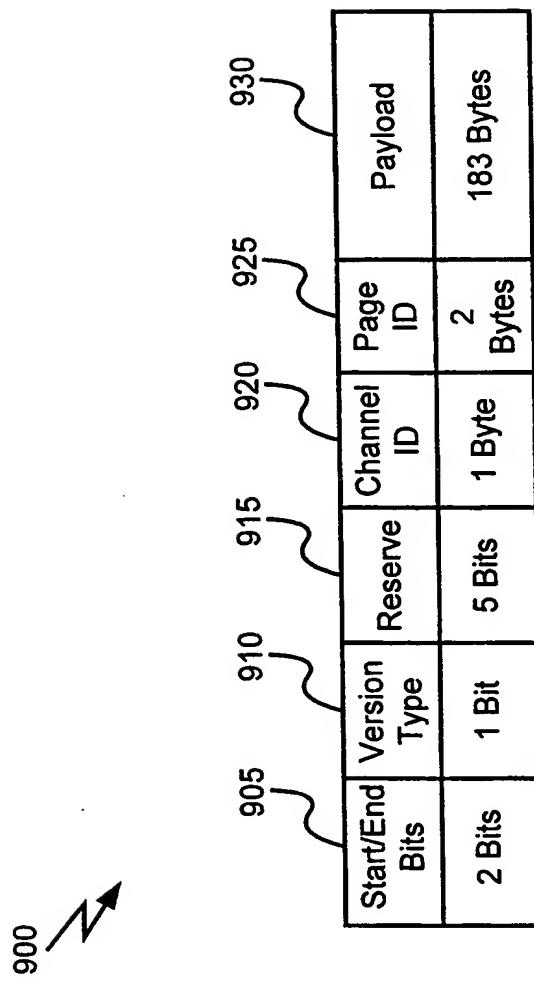


FIG. 9 (Content Page - Others)

10/15

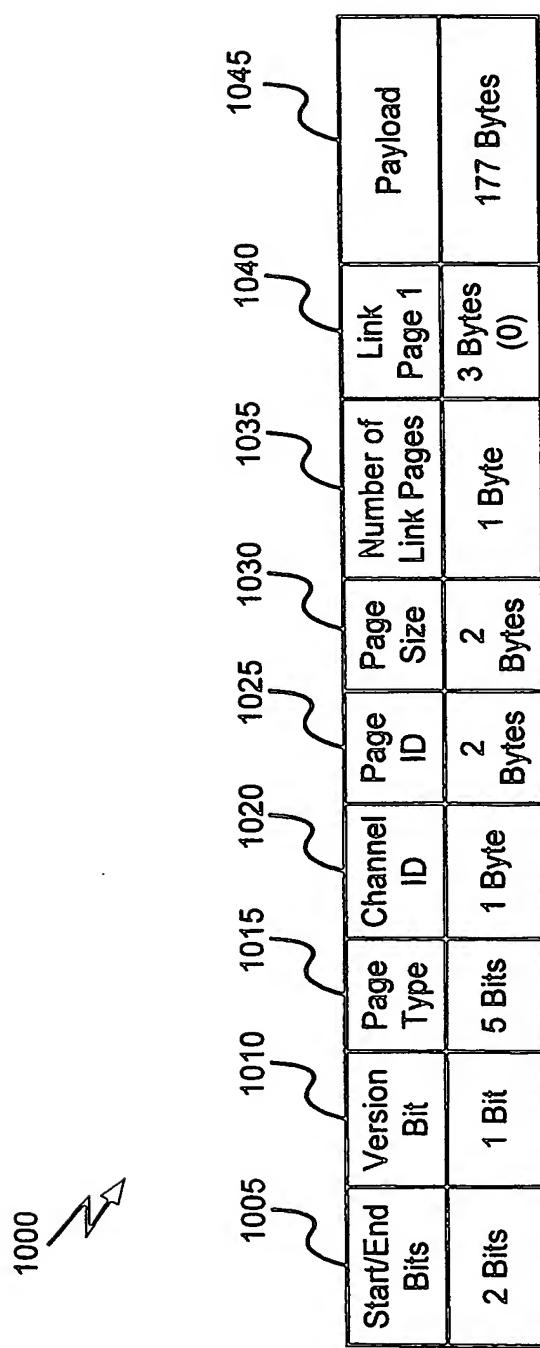


FIG. 10 (Control Page)

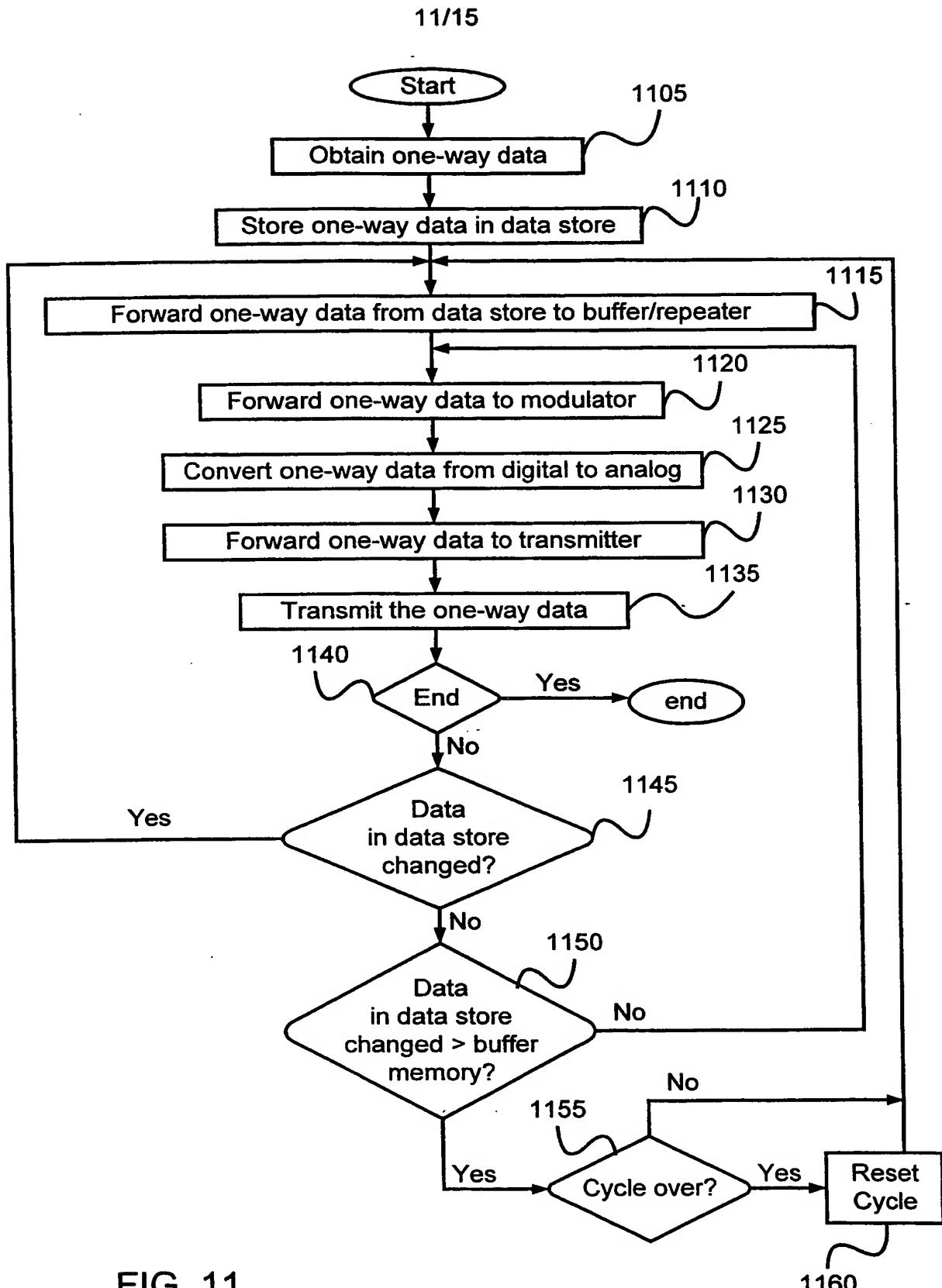
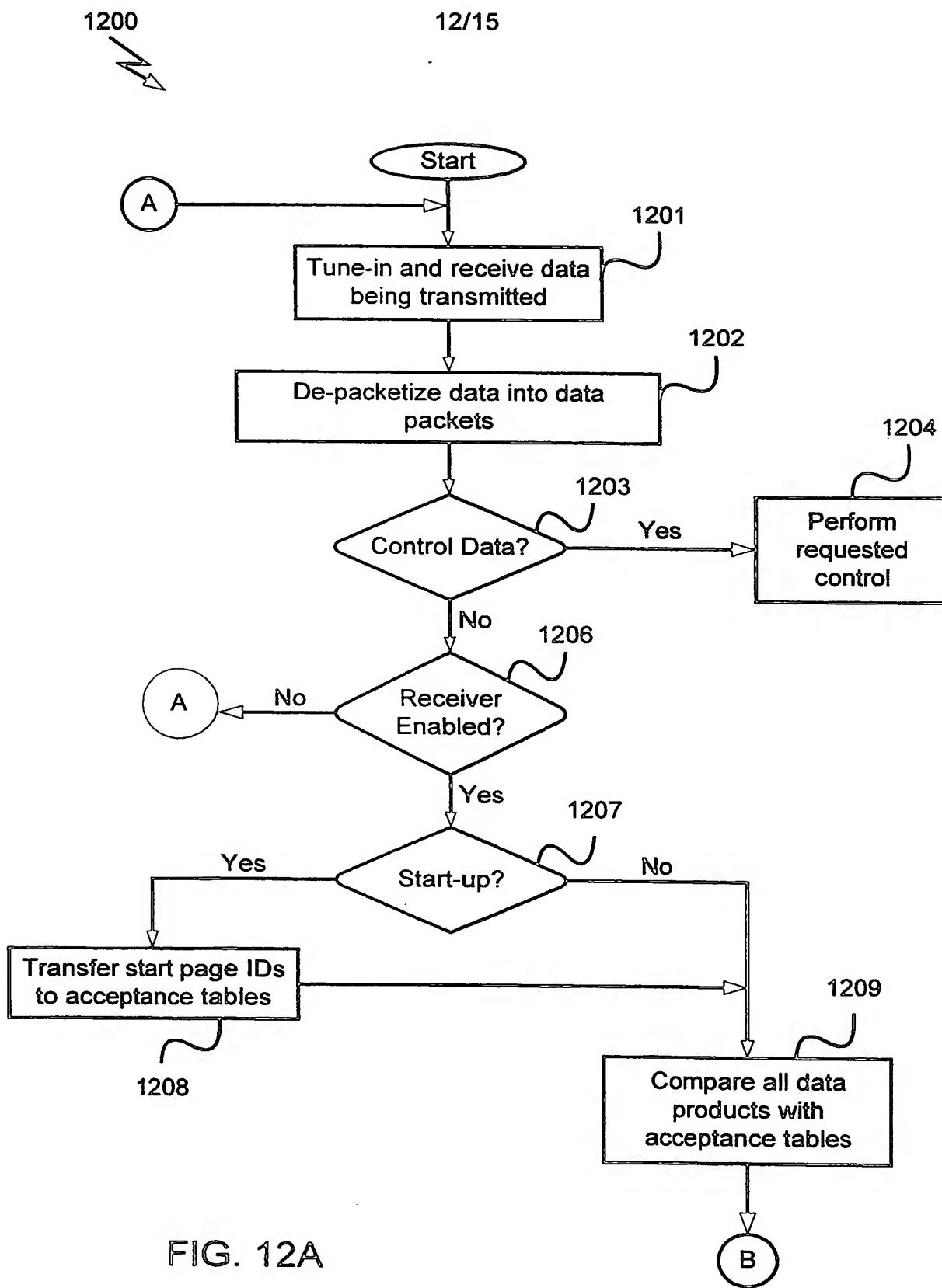


FIG. 11



13/15

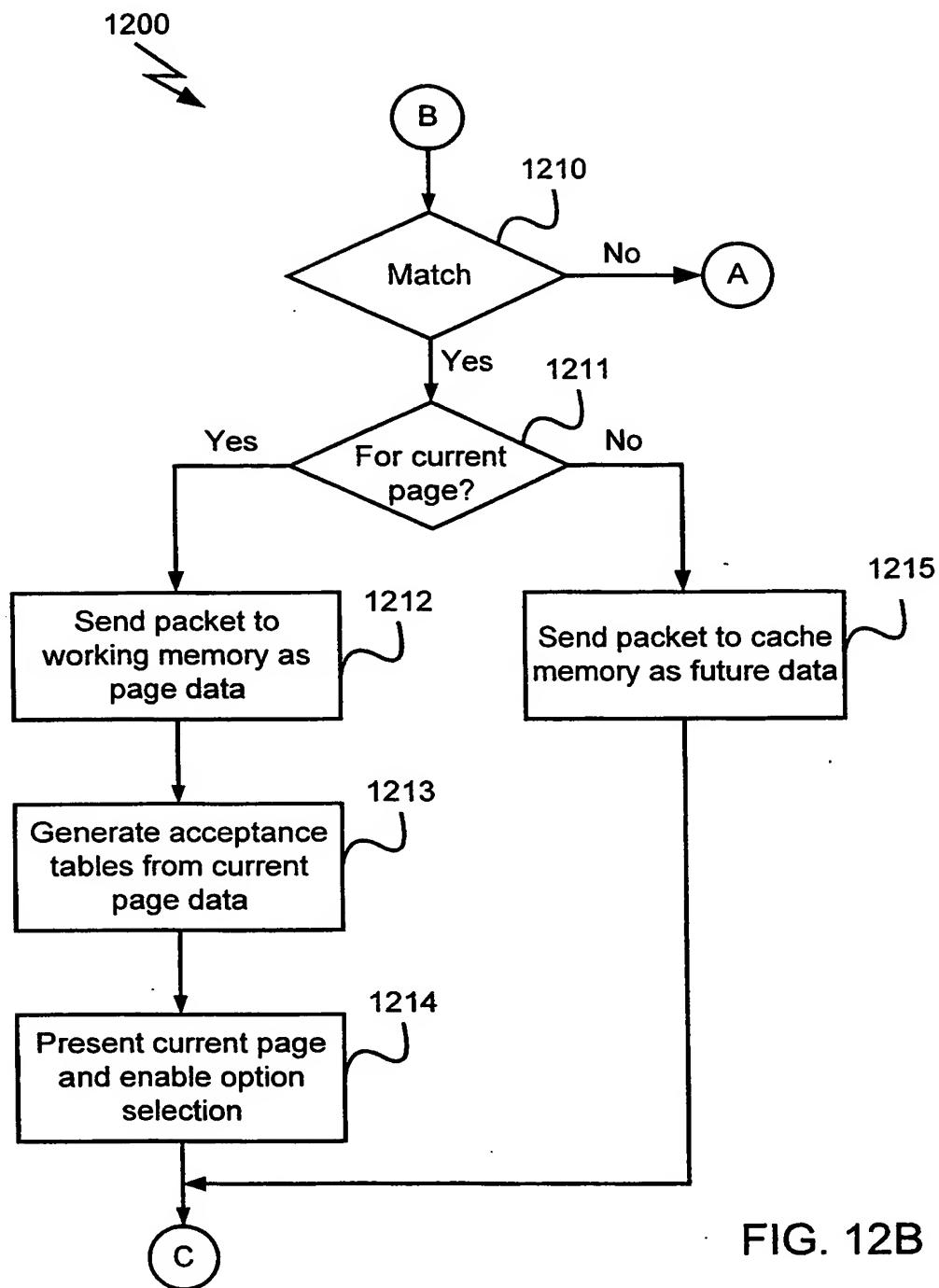


FIG. 12B

14/15

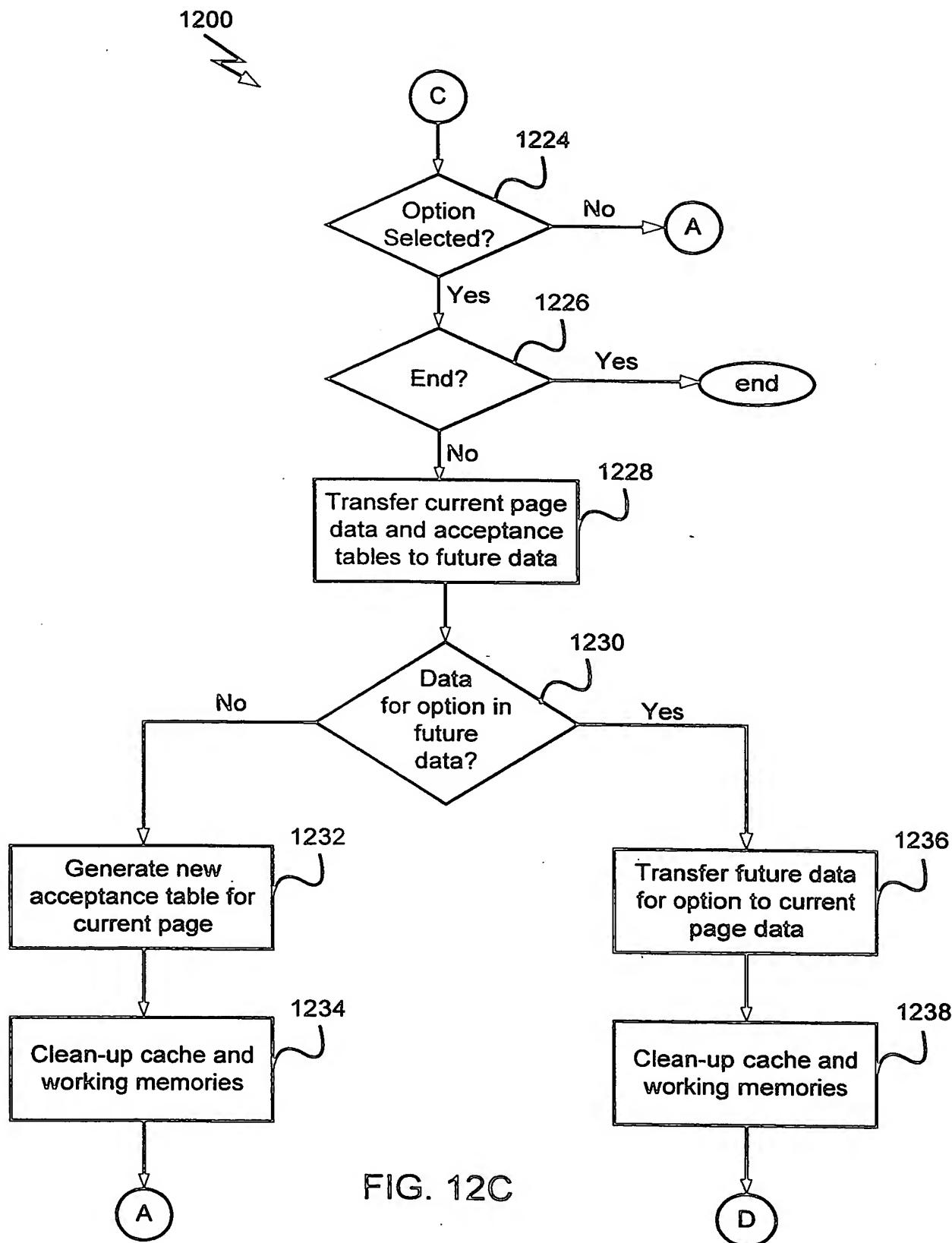


FIG. 12C

15/15

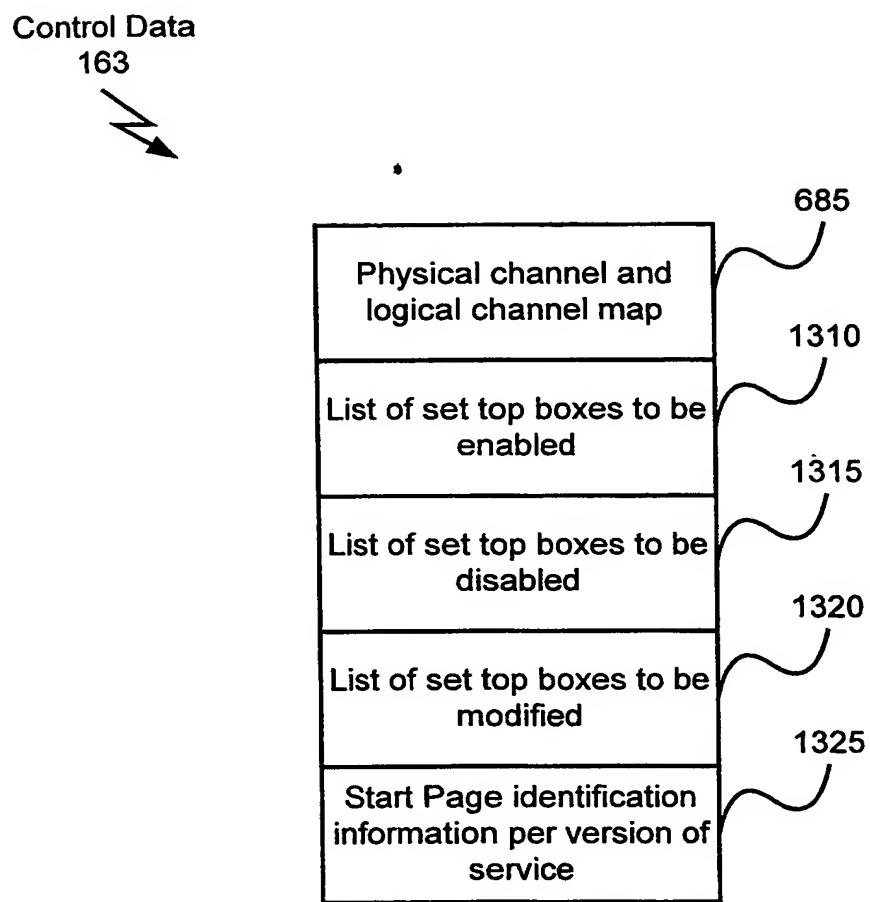


FIG. 13

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No

PCT/US 99/24861

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
 IPC 7 H04N7/16 H04N7/24 H04N5/00

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
 IPC 7 H04N

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	EP 0 827 340 A (MATSUSHITA ELECTRIC IND CO LTD) 4 March 1998 (1998-03-04) abstract column 6, line 15 -column 18, line 5 column 20, line 54 -column 27, line 25 figure 1B figures 3-7 figures 9-11G figures 14-21	1-29, 31-45 30
Y	---	-/-

Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.

Patent family members are listed in annex.

^o Special categories of cited documents :

- "A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance
- "E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date
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Date of the actual completion of the international search

Date of mailing of the international search report

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No

PCT/US 99/24861

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